

ASSEMBLY, No. 306

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

217th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2016 SESSION

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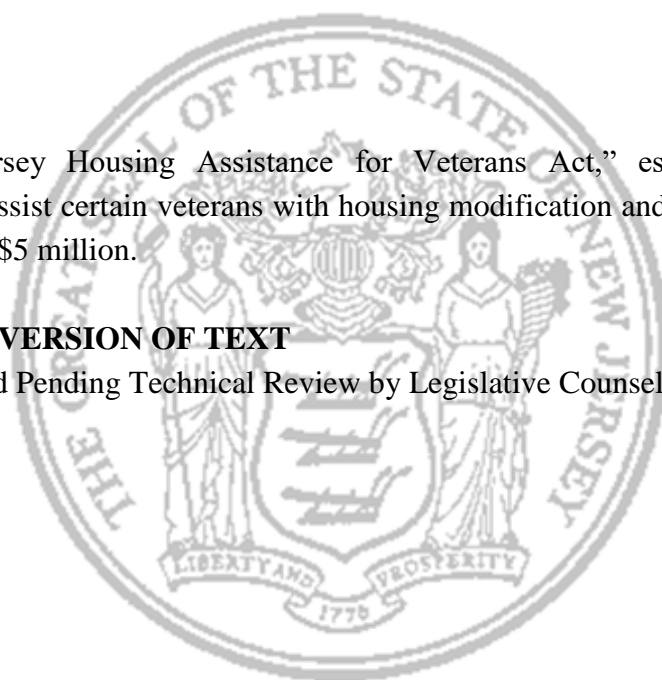
**Assemblymen Andrzejczak, Mukherji, Assemblywoman Mosquera,
Assemblyman DeAngelo, Assemblywomen B.DeCroce, Quijano,
Assemblymen C.A.Brown, Rible, McKeon, Assemblywoman Muoio and
Assemblyman Holley**

SYNOPSIS

“New Jersey Housing Assistance for Veterans Act,” establishes pilot program to assist certain veterans with housing modification and rehabilitation; appropriates \$5 million.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 4/5/2016)

1 **AN ACT** concerning the modification and rehabilitation of housing
2 for certain veterans, supplementing chapter 27D of Title 52 of
3 the Revised Statutes, and making an appropriation.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*

7
8 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the “New Jersey
9 Housing Assistance for Veterans Act.”

10
11 2. As used in this act:

12 “Director” means the Director of the Division of Housing and
13 Community Resources in the Department of Community Affairs.

14 “Disabled” means a person who fulfills the definition of having a
15 “disability” pursuant to section 3 of the “Americans with
16 Disabilities Act of 1990,” 42 U.S.C. s.12102.

17 “Division” means the Division of Housing and Community
18 Resources in the Department of Community Affairs.

19 “Eligible veteran” means a disabled or low-income veteran.

20 “Energy efficient features or equipment” means features or
21 equipment within a primary residence that help to reduce the
22 amount of electricity used to heat, cool, or ventilate the residence,
23 including but not limited to insulation, weatherstripping, air sealing,
24 repaired heating systems, or duct sealing.

25 “Family member” means a spouse, child, parent, sibling, aunt,
26 uncle, niece, nephew, first cousin, grandparent, grandchild, father-
27 in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, stepparent,
28 stepchild, stepbrother, stepsister, half brother, or half sister, whether
29 the individual is related by blood, marriage, or adoption.

30 “Low-income veteran” means a veteran occupying a household
31 with a gross household income equal to 50 percent or less of the
32 median gross household income for households of the same size,
33 and within the same housing region, as defined by subsection b. of
34 section 4 of P.L.1985, c.222 (C.52:27D-304).

35 “Primary residence” means a dwelling unit that is owned by the
36 eligible veteran or by a family member of the eligible veteran, and
37 occupied by the eligible veteran as his or her principle residence.

38 “Qualified organization” means a nonprofit veterans'
39 organization that qualifies as a section 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(19) tax
40 exempt organization under the Internal Revenue Code.

41 “Veteran” means any resident of the State who has been
42 honorably discharged or released under honorable circumstances
43 from active service in any branch of the armed forces of the United
44 States, or any honorably discharged member of the American
45 Merchant Marine who served during World War II and is declared
46 by the United States Department of Defense to be eligible for
47 federal veterans' benefits.

1 3. The director shall establish a pilot program to award grants
2 to qualified organizations to rehabilitate and modify the primary
3 residences of eligible veterans, and shall manage the pilot program
4 in consultation with the Adjutant General of the Department of
5 Military and Veterans' Affairs to most effectively advance the
6 needs of eligible veterans. The director shall administer the pilot
7 program for five years following the operative date of P.L. ,
8 c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill). Grant
9 awards totaling \$1 million shall be awarded during each year the
10 pilot program is in operation.

11 a. In addition to any additional information required by the
12 director, a qualified organization seeking a grant under the pilot
13 program shall submit an application to the division that shall
14 include the following information:

15 (1) the approximate number of veterans the qualified
16 organization has the capacity to serve through grant funding; and

17 (2) a description of the type of work to be completed, such as
18 interior home modifications, energy efficiency improvements, and
19 other similar categories of work.

20 b. In order to receive a grant award under the pilot program, a
21 qualified organization shall:

22 (1) demonstrate expertise in providing housing rehabilitation
23 and modification services for the purpose of making homes
24 accessible, functional, and safe;

25 (2) have experience in successfully carrying out accountability
26 and reporting requirements involved in the proper administration of
27 grant funds; and

28 (3) commit to paying workers employed through the pilot
29 program no less than the prevailing wage rate for the worker's craft
30 or trade, as determined by the Commissioner of Labor and
31 Workforce Development pursuant to P.L.1963, c.150 (C.34:11-
32 56.25 et seq.).

33 c. In awarding grants under the pilot program, the director shall
34 give preference to qualified organizations that employ workers from
35 an apprenticeable trade participating in the Helmets to Hardhats
36 Program, as certified by the New Jersey State Building and
37 Construction Trades Council, such that not less than five percent of
38 projected labor hours shall be completed by such participating
39 organizations.

40 d. Low income veterans who are also disabled shall receive
41 preference over other eligible veterans in selection for assistance
42 under the pilot program.

43 e. Grant awards under the pilot program shall be used to
44 modify and rehabilitate the primary residences of eligible veterans,
45 and for other purposes necessary to advance this goal, as permitted
46 by the director. Permitted uses of grant funding shall include, but
47 shall not be limited to:

- 1 (1) installing wheelchair ramps, widening exterior and interior
- 2 doors, reconfiguring and re-equipping bathrooms to enhance
- 3 accessibility, removing doorway thresholds, and installing
- 4 appropriate floor coverings to accommodate the functional
- 5 limitations that result from having a disability;
- 6 (2) rehabilitating homes that are in a state of interior or exterior
- 7 disrepair; and
- 8 (3) installing energy efficient features or equipment if the
- 9 eligible veteran's monthly residential utility costs are greater than
- 10 five percent of monthly household income, and an energy audit of
- 11 the residence indicates that the installation of energy efficient
- 12 features or equipment would reduce utility costs by 10 percent or
- 13 more.
- 14 f. No qualified organization shall be awarded more than
- 15 \$400,000 through the pilot program in any one fiscal year. A
- 16 qualified organization receiving a grant shall contribute a matching
- 17 contribution in an amount not less than 50 percent of the grant
- 18 award. This matching requirement may be met through cash
- 19 contributions, or in-kind contributions, as permitted by the director.
- 20 Eligible veterans benefitting from the pilot program shall not pay an
- 21 application fee or any other cost for the work completed on their
- 22 residence, unless a modest fee can be charged, as permitted by the
- 23 director, without forcing the veteran's total monthly housing costs
- 24 to exceed 30 percent of total household income.
- 25 g. (1) The director shall provide an annual report to the
- 26 Governor, and the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991,
- 27 c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), presenting the following information with
- 28 respect to the associated year of the pilot program:
- 29 (a) the number of eligible veterans provided assistance under
- 30 the pilot program;
- 31 (b) the socioeconomic characteristics of the benefited veterans;
- 32 (c) the total number, types, and locations of qualified
- 33 organizations offered grant funding under the pilot program;
- 34 (d) the amount of matching funds, and form of in-kind
- 35 contributions raised with each grant;
- 36 (e) a description of the housing rehabilitation and modification
- 37 services provided, costs saved, and actions taken under the pilot
- 38 program;
- 39 (f) a description of the outreach initiatives implemented to
- 40 educate the general public and qualified organizations about the
- 41 pilot program, and to identify eligible veterans and their families;
- 42 and
- 43 (g) a description of compensation offered to workers employed
- 44 through the pilot program, and a certification that workers have not
- 45 been paid less than the prevailing wage rate for the worker's craft or
- 46 trade, as determined by the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce
- 47 Development pursuant to P.L.1963, c.150 (C.34:11-56.25 et seq.).

1 (h) any other information that the director considers relevant in
2 assessing the pilot program.

3 (2) Not later than six months following completion of the pilot
4 program, the director shall provide another report to the Governor,
5 and the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164
6 (C.52:14-19.1), presenting information necessary to assess the
7 success of the pilot program as a whole.
8

9 4. The Director of the Division of Local Government Services
10 in the Department of Community Affairs shall promulgate rules and
11 regulations, pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act,"
12 P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), to effectuate the provisions of
13 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), on
14 or before the first day of the fifth month next following enactment.
15

16 5. There is appropriated from the General Fund the sum of \$5
17 million to the Division of Local Government Services in the
18 Department of Community Affairs for the purposes of effectuating
19 the provisions of this act.
20

21 6. This act shall take effect immediately, but sections 1 through
22 3 shall remain inoperative until the first day of the fifth month next
23 following enactment.
24
25

26 STATEMENT

27

28 This bill creates the "New Jersey Housing Assistance for
29 Veterans Act" as a five-year pilot program to assist disabled and
30 low income veterans with housing modification and rehabilitation
31 needs, and appropriates \$5 million from the general fund.

32 This bill requires the Director of the Division of Housing and
33 Community Resources ("director") in the Department of
34 Community Affairs to manage the pilot program, in coordination
35 with the Adjutant General of the Department of Military and
36 Veterans' Affairs, to award grants to nonprofit organizations for the
37 modification and rehabilitation of certain veterans' housing. To be
38 eligible for the program, a veteran would have to either be disabled,
39 or have a household income of no greater than 50 percent of the
40 median regional household income. Veterans who are both low
41 income and disabled would receive preference over other eligible
42 veterans in selection for assistance. Work would only be permitted
43 on the veteran's primary residence.

44 The bill appropriates \$5 million from the general fund, of which
45 the director would distribute \$1 million during each of five years to
46 nonprofit organizations towards the modification and rehabilitation
47 of veterans' housing. No nonprofit would receive more than
48 \$400,000 through the pilot program in any one fiscal year.

1 Nonprofits receiving a grant would have to contribute a 50 percent
2 match through either cash or in-kind contributions. Veterans
3 benefiting from the pilot program would not be required to
4 contribute any payment for the work, unless a modest fee can be
5 charged, as permitted by the director, without forcing the veteran's
6 total monthly housing costs to exceed 30 percent of total household
7 income.

8 A nonprofit organization seeking a grant would be required to
9 submit an application to the director that would include an estimate
10 of the number of veterans that the organization has the capacity to
11 serve, and a description of the type of work that would be
12 completed. Grants would only be awarded to organizations that can
13 demonstrate certain expertise in home modification and
14 rehabilitation, and experience in successfully carrying out
15 accountability and reporting requirements involved in the proper
16 administration of grant funds, and that commit to paying workers
17 the prevailing wage rate pursuant to N.J.S.A.34:11-56.25 et seq. In
18 awarding grants, preference would be given to nonprofits that
19 employ workers from an apprenticeable trade participating in the
20 Helmets to Hardhats Program as certified by the New Jersey State
21 Building and Construction Trades Council, such that not less than
22 five percent of projected labor hours would be completed by such
23 nonprofits.

24 The director would be required to promulgate rules and
25 regulations on or before the first day of the fifth month next
26 following this bill's enactment. As the program is in progress, the
27 director would submit an annual report to the Governor and the
28 Legislature detailing the number of eligible veterans provided
29 assistance, their socioeconomic characteristics, what nonprofit
30 organizations have received grants, what matching contributions
31 they have provided, the types of projects completed, the outreach
32 initiatives undertaken to identify eligible veterans and qualified
33 nonprofits, and any other information the director considers
34 relevant in assessing the pilot program.